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CLINTON APPOINTS MEMBERS OF ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INTEREST OBLIGATIONS OF DIGITAL TELEVISION BROADCASTERS

Clinton Appoints Members of Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters

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WASHINGTON, Oct. 22 /U.S. Newswire/ -- The vice president today announced the president's intention to appoint the following individuals as members of the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters.

Charles Benton, of Chicago, is currently chairman and CEO of Public Media Incorporated, which is a distributor and publisher of film and video programs. He also serves as chairman and CEO of the Benton Foundation, an organization whose mandate is to connect Americans with the emerging digital communications environment. Benton has extensive experience in the business, non-profit, and public service sectors. Benton holds a B.A. from Yale University and has completed graduate studies at Northwestern University and the National College of Education.

Frank Blythe, of Lincoln, Neb., is the executive director of Native American Public Telecommunications (NAPT), a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation, where he manages the production and distribution of American Indian films, videos, and radio programming to the Public Broadcasting System and the American Indian Radio On Satellite Network. Previous to his work with NAPT, he spent 15 years working in commercial broadcasting in Phoenix, Lincoln and Omaha. Blythe holds a B.A. from Arizona State University and has done graduate work at Arizona State University and Harvard University. Blythe is an enrolled member of the Eastern Cherokee Tribe and the Sisseton Dakota Sioux Nation heritage.

Peggy Charren, of Cambridge, Mass., is the founder of Action for Children's Television, a national child advocacy organization that encourages responsible broadcasting practices. She is currently a visiting scholar at the Harvard University Graduate School of Education. Charren holds academic honors from Radcliffe College and Connecticut College and honorary degrees from six colleges and universities.

Harold C. Crump, of St. Paul, Minn., is the vice president of corporate affairs for Hubbard Broadcasting, Inc. Previous to joining Hubbard Broadcasting, Inc., Crump was president and CEO of Crump Communications, Inc. and owner and operator of WCSC-TV in South Carolina. Prior to that he was president of H&C Broadcast Group of Houston, Texas. Crump graduated from the University of Mississippi in 1953 with a B.B.A. in Advertising.

Frank Cruz, of Laguna Niguel, Calif., is a member of the board of directors of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting. He is also a founder of Telemundo, the nation's second largest Spanish language network. Cruz is currently the president of Cruz and Associates Inc., a financial consultant group. He holds an A.A. from East Los Angeles College and a B.A. and an M.A. from the University of Southern California.

Robert Decherd, of Dallas, is chairman of the board, president, and CEO of A.H. Belo Corp., which is a leading television broadcasting and newspaper publishing company. A.H. Belo Corp. owns 16 network-affiliated television stations, six daily newspapers, three local or regional cable news channels and a production company. Decherd

is a graduate of Harvard University.

Barry Diller, of New York City and Los Angeles, is the chairman and chief executive officer of HSN, Inc., the parent company of Home Shopping Network, Silver King Broadcasting, SF Broadcasting, the Internet Shopping Network, and Vela Research. Diller has previously served as chairman and CEO of Fox, Inc. and Paramount Pictures Corporations. Prior to Paramount Pictures, Diller was vice president of Prime Time Television for ABC Entertainment and pioneered the made-for television "Movie of the Week" known as mini-series.

Dr. William Duhamel, of Rapid City, S.D., is the president of Duhamel Broadcasting Enterprises, a family-held South Dakota corporation. Dr. Duhamel was one of the co-founders of South Dakota Cable Television, Inc., which brought the first cable television service to western South Dakota in 1966. Dr. Duhamel holds a B.A. and an M.A. from St. Louis University, and a Ph.D. from Stanford University.

Rob Glaser, of Seattle, is the founder and chief executive officer of Real Works, an Internet company focused on using multimedia and on-line communications technologies. Prior to founding Real Networks, he served as vice president for Multimedia and Consumer Systems at Microsoft Corporation. Glaser holds a B.A., a B.S. and an M.A. from Yale University.

Jim Goodmon, of Raleigh, N.C., is the president and CEO of Capitol Broadcasting Company, Inc., which has eleven wholly owned subsidiaries and has been a family business for three generations. Goodman attended Duke University.

Paul La Camera, of Newton, Mass., is vice president and general manager of WCVB-TV, Channel 5 -- Boston's ABC affiliate television station. La Camera's career in television began in community relations leading to station management, and includes many broadcast honors and awards, including several Peabody awards. La Camera holds a B.A. from Holy Cross College, Worcester, Mass., a Master of Journalism and Master of Urban Studies from Boston University, and an M.B.A. from Boston College.

Richard Masur, of Los Angeles, is an actor who has appeared on numerous television series and feature films. He is the president of the Screen Actors Guild and is on the board of directors of the Hollywood Policy Center and The Creative Coalition.

Newton Minow, of Chicago, is counsel to the law firm of Sidley and Austin. He also serves as the Annenberg University Professor of Communications Policy and Law at Northwestern University. President Kennedy appointed him chairman of the Federal Communications Commission in 1960. He served in the Kennedy administration until 1963, when he became executive vice president and general counsel of Encyclopedia Britannica, Inc. Minow holds a B.A. and a J.D. from Northwestern University.

Shelby Scott, of Boston, is president of the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists (AFTRA), an 80,000 member union of broadcast journalists, announcers, performers, writers, technicians, and others. She is currently a freelance reporter for WBZ-TV in Boston. Scott holds a B.A. from the University of Washington.

Gigi Sohn, of Washington, D.C., is executive director of Media Access Project. The 'American Lawyer' recently selected Sohn as one of the top 45 "Public Sector" lawyers under the age of 45. Sohn holds a B.S. from Boston University and a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania.

Karen Peltz Strauss, of Washington, D.C., is the legal counsel for

telecommunications policy for the National Association of the Deaf. In this capacity, she represents deaf and hard of hearing communities on all matters pertaining to telecommunications access. She is a former supervising attorney for the National Center for Law and Deafness at Gallaudet University. Strauss holds a B.A. from Boston University, a J.D. from the University of Pennsylvania and an L.L.M. from Georgetown University.

Cass R. Sunstein, of Chicago, is the Karl N. Llewellyn Distinguished Professor of Jurisprudence at the University of Chicago. He is an expert in First Amendment issues. He is the author of *Democracy and the Problem of Free Speech*, 1995. Sunstein holds an A.B. from Harvard College and a J.D. from Harvard Law School.

Lois Jean White, of Knoxville, Tenn., is president-elect for the national PTA, is a former member of the national PTA's Education Commission, Individual and Organizational Development Commission, and is past president of the Tennessee State PTA. She has also served as a member of the Board of the Knoxville Museum of Art. White holds a B.S. from Fisk University and has done extensive graduate work at Indiana University.

James Yee, of San Francisco, is the executive director of the Independent Television Service (ITS), a non-profit organization funded by, but independent of, the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, created to increase diversity and the scope of programming available to public television. Formerly he was the executive director at the National Asian American Telecommunications Association for 12 years. Yee received his B.A. in History from Fairleigh Dickinson University, his M.A. in Education from Antioch Graduate School of Education, and has done post graduate studies at Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

The Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters was created by Executive Order on March 11, 1997, to study and make recommendations on the public interest responsibilities accompanying broadcasters' receipt of digital television licenses. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 authorizes the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to issue licenses for digital television services under the condition that the broadcasters remain subject to public interest obligations as deemed appropriate by the FCC, and the return of the analog spectrum used for broadcasting television signals. The committee is expected to submit a report to the vice president regarding their findings on or before June 1998.

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COALITION LAUNCHES BROAD PUBLIC EDUCATION CAMPAIGN ON THE FUTURE OF DIGITAL TELEVISION

Coalition Launches Broad Public Education Campaign on the Future of Digital Television

WASHINGTON, Oct. 5 /U.S. Newswire/ -- A coalition of prominent groups today launched a major campaign to educate and mobilize the public on the future of digital television (DTV).

The Center for Media Education (CME), the Civil Rights Forum for Communications Policy and the Project on Media Ownership (PROMO) plan several coordinated efforts designed to foster broad public debate on the issue, and to encourage public participation in several key Federal government proceedings that will determine the future shape and direction of digital television in the U.S.

As Jeff Chester, executive director of the Center for Media Education, explained, "The impending shift to digital TV signals the birth of a new medium that will have an unprecedented impact on our families, our communities, and our democracy. The public doesn't yet understand the full impact of the changes that are underway in television. In the transition to digital, television will merge with the personal computer, ushering in many new channels and services, and creating a powerful new interactive media culture. Will the next generation of television become a vast, virtual, interactive informational or a medium that fosters a more civil and civic-oriented society?"

The Presidential Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations for Digital Television, known as the "Gore Commission," will release a report within the next two months which will recommend options for how commercial broadcasters should fulfill their public obligations as "public trustee" of the public airwaves in the digital era. While the Commission's deliberations have gone largely unnoticed by the public, there will be an opportunity for greater public participation when the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) launches a formal rulemaking procedure in early 1999 to develop the policies for digital TV.

Conspicuously absent in the coverage of this issue thus far is both an acknowledgment of the financial windfall broadcasters will enjoy in the digital era, and an appraisal of the vast potential the new media have to serve the public interest.

The same interactive services that will prove such a boon to marketing could also be devoted to more vital, socially useful ends. "Digital TV will affect our economy but it will also affect our democracy and our children. We need to hear from the public about how local TV should meet its obligation to serve the local community," said Mark Lloyd, director of the Civil Rights Forum.

CME's Chester added, "Most Americans have no idea that they have bankrolled broadcasting's move to DTV by a \$40 billion dollar giveaway of spectrum. By giving that industry free use of such prime real estate along the information superhighway, our lawmakers have engaged in what might be this decade's most egregious form of corporate welfare. Broadcasters, who will reap huge profits from this resource, must offer in return a meaningful public-service dividend that will enrich our democratic society in the 21st Century."

Professor Mark Crispin Miller of PROMO concluded, "The age of digital TV is fast upon us, but unless we act now, there is little hope that the new medium will live up to its vast civic and aesthetic potential.

In the absence of new public-interest requirements, the broadcasters will have little incentive to offer anything more than the same market-driven fare that currently dominates the public airwaves. We have a right to demand much more than that for the sake of our democracy, our culture, and our children."

The campaign is expected to call for a range of public interest obligations for digital broadcasters, designed to ensure affordable access to information and news, quality educational programming for children, coverage of community affairs, and free air time for political debate.

----- For more information about the campaign, contact Caty Borum at CME, 202-628-2620.

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From Gore's office

ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC INTEREST OBLIGATIONS OF DIGITAL TELEVISION BROADCASTERS

BACKGROUND:

Today, the Advisory Committee on Public Interest Obligations of Digital Television Broadcasters, also known as the Gore Commission, will meet to make some major decisions in advance of their final report which must be presented to the Vice President by December 31st. The commission must recommend the public interest obligations that digital television broadcasters must assume (i.e. free tv time for political candidates, educational television etc.) Representatives of the broadcast industry are likely to dissent on certain issues including whether to set minimum standards for broadcasters while public interest advocates are likely to highlight the commission's shortfalls.

Q: Are you concerned that the Gore Commission may not recommend mandatory free broadcast time for political candidates?

A: The President and Vice President support providing free air time for political candidates. The President called for free TV time in his State of the Union Address and Vice President Gore has introduced legislation to provide free TV time to candidates. We believe that now is the time, as we convert from analog to digital television, to give the public free and fair political discourse while helping to slow the runaway costs of political campaigns. As the President has said, "There's simply too much money raised in campaigns, it takes too much time to raise, and it raises too many questions." We are hopeful that the Commission will include a recommendation for free candidate access and better civic discourse when they report to the Vice President in December.

Q: Are you concerned that the broadcasters will not support the recommendations?

A: The President appointed the Advisory Committee and charged it with the complex task of recommending a blueprint for serving the public interest in the digital future. From the beginning, we all knew that this would be an extremely challenging task, but it is of critical importance. Fundamentally, we don't think Americans want the future of television to be one vast new digital wasteland. The transition from analog to digital television and the digital licenses that the broadcasters have received for free, may bring untold new opportunities through better quality, new services and more channels. This commission is charged with recommending public interest obligations that are commensurate with these new opportunities. We believe that clear public interest rules serve the interests of both the broadcasters and viewers.

Q: Will you support the Committee's proposal for creating educational channels?

A: It is premature to comment on any of the current draft proposals. However, the President and Vice President have made education their number one priority while also helping to give parents more choices on television. In the analog world the President and Vice President convened a White House Summit on children's television which led to a new commitment by broadcasters to air at least three hours a week of educational and instructional television; they led the fight for the V-Chip and the new television ratings system; and have defended efforts by some to cut investments in public television. In the digital world, they have proposed significant increases for public broadcastings transition to digital television. We look forward to recommendations from the commission on what broadcasters must do to meet their public interest obligations in exchange for their free use of the airwaves.

Q: Jesse Jackson asked to address the Advisory Committee on diversity issues. Will the Committee's report include recommendations on diversity?

A: Reverend Jackson wrote to the Committee directly. We understand that the Committee invited Reverend Jackson to speak at its November meeting, but that his schedule did not allow him to attend. We understand that the Committee has been considering the issue of diversity, but its recommendations are not yet final. Again, we will wait to see what the Committee eventually recommends.

Q: Drafts of the report suggest a trade off between minimum standards for broadcasters and "digital must carry." Do you support "must carry" for broadcasters?

A: We will review any recommendations carefully, but have no comment on this topic at this time.

Q: What are public interest obligations?

A: Since the beginning of modern television, broadcasters have had responsibilities to the public in exchange for their use of the public's airwaves. The Telecommunications Act of 1996 authorizes the FCC to issue licenses for digital television under the condition that broadcasters remain subject to public interest obligations as deemed appropriate by the FCC. The public interest obligations for analog television have changed over time. Some examples include: 3 hours of educational and instructional programming a week; television ratings to work with the V-Chip; prohibitions from transmitting obscene, profane or indecent material; television

advertising prohibitions including requirements to identify a sponsor and prohibitions on tobacco advertising and limits on advertising during children's programming; access to broadcast facilities by candidates for elected office; the personal attack rule; the "fair break" doctrine; and closed captioning.